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RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 001318

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL PTER KPAL KWBG UNSC FR IS LY

SUBJECT: LIBYAN DRAFT UNSCR ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS:
FURTHER THOUGHTS FROM THE FRENCH MFA

REF: A. USUN 614
1B. STATE 73171
1C. PARIS 1292
1D. PARIS 1284 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Kathleen Allegrone for reas
ons 1.4. (b), (d).

11. (C) Unaware of fast-moving events in New York (per ref
A), we met late July 9 with French MFA NEA A/S-equivalent
Patrice Paoli to discuss the Libyan draft UNSCR and other
topics (reported separately). Paoli noted his earlier
conversation the same day with NEA A/S Welch. We presented
Paoli the points in ref b for use in all UNSC capitals.
Paoli's response was predictable and consistent with what
French MFA DAS-equivalent Ludovic Pouille had previously
expressed (ref D):

--France agrees with the substance of our concerns and will
work to amend the Libyan draft, but will not present an
alternative for reasons of timing, i.e., the July 13 Union
for Mediterranean Summit and the need to avoid giving Arab
participants a pretext to boycott.

--France would prefer that we seek the insertion of the
elements we want included by working on the basis of the
Libyan draft. France and a significant number of UNSC
members would likely support us.

--The Arabs are frustrated with the situation (i.e.,
continued delays and continued Israeli defiance vis--vis
settlements) and would immediately put in blue their
resolution if presented with an alternative draft as we
propose.

--The ideal remains to play for time, but the French do not
see how doing so will prevent the Arabs from insisting on
bringing their resolution to a vote at some point in the
process.

--France has reached out to "like-minded" Arab states, but
they have either been "reticent" (most notably Egypt) or
hostile (most notably Saudi Arabia, which presented what
Paoli claimed to have been the first written demarche from
them he had seen in years).

--Within the EU, there is impatience and frustration with
Israel's policies. Paoli noted that President Sarkozy's
tough words in front of the Knesset during his recent visit,
have made it harder for France to ignore the situation.
Paoli and DAS-equivalent for the Levant Ludovic Pouille
referred to Quartet Envoy Tony Blair's disquiet over Israeli
actions along with that of EU external affairs commissioner
Ferrero-Waldner and French FM Kouchner when the three had
dinner July 7 (ref C).

--France considers that the current situation underscores the
philosophical dilemma that, because of the constant

disagreements that generally result in an impasse, the UNSC is unable to say anything about one of the world's major problems.

--The latest impasse at the UNSC also underlines the challenge we face in the short and immediate term to achieve the goal we share, and which is achievable, for the long term.

¶2. (C) In summing up, Paoli stated the French bottom line:

--France can agree to support discussion of our proposed elements but only on the basis of modifying the Arab draft the UNSC is considering;

--France, the U.S., and other supporters of the Annapolis process have to limit the damaging impression that the Israelis continue to defy the international community over settlements without any negative repercussions; and

-- France, the U.S., and other supporters of the Annapolis process must recognize the intense anger and frustration of the Arabs who have no desire to continue negotiations on a text with no clear end in sight.

¶3. (U) Late note: The French MFA deputy press spokesperson released the following statement on Israeli settlements at the July 10 daily press briefing (informal Embassy translation):

Begin text:

France condemns the Israeli decision to request tenders for

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the construction of 920 dwellings in the settlement of Har Homa, south of Jerusalem.

This decision contributes to the weakening of the credibility of the diplomatic process in progress.

France considers the pursuit of the settlements an obstacle to peace. France recalls the requirement, written in the Roadmap that the parties committed to respect during the Annapolis conference, for a complete freeze of settlement activities, including those linked to "natural growth" in all of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

France invites the Israeli authorities to review this decision and to refrain from any unilateral action that could prejudge the final status of the Palestinian territories, notably Jerusalem.

End text

¶4. (C) Comment: President Sarkozy has expended so much political capital and personal prestige in seeking high-level Arab participation in the July 13 Union for the Mediterranean that we judge extremely firm French position not to take any actions that would give the Arabs a reason to boycott the Summit. Underscoring particularly sensitivity regarding Libya, Paoli emphasized that Libya is the only country under the rubric of Union for the Mediterranean that is not sending any representative to the Summit, much less a head of state.

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